

SECTION 8 HOUSING FLEXIBLE
VOUCHER PROPOSAL**HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the administration's proposed restructuring of the Section 8 Housing Program, particularly in regard to the block grant funding proposal, which is especially important to low-income men and women in my home state of New Jersey.

The Section 8 Housing Program currently assists two million individuals including elderly citizens, persons with disabilities, and low-income working families to meet their housing needs. The proposed Section 8 restructuring will leave states and local public housing authorities starved of the necessary financial resources they need to keep up with the demand for housing. Local housing authorities will be forced to either substantially raise rent or cut the number of vouchers distributed, severely hampering the program's effectiveness in helping Americans afford a safe and secure place to live.

Nationally, the Congressional Budget Office recently estimated that proposed changes to the Section 8 Housing Program will lead to the elimination of 600,000 vouchers by 2009, which equals thirty percent of all vouchers now in use. In 2005 alone an estimated 250,000 families could lose their housing assistance, including 7,181 families in New Jersey. For example, in Fiscal Year 2005, the Jersey City Housing Authority, located in my district, will face an expected \$3,117,611 in funding reductions resulting in an estimated cut of 351 currently assisted families. The Housing Authority of Bergen County, also located within my district, expects a funding cut of \$4,056,468, resulting in 434 families currently receiving assistance to lose their vouchers.

While losses such as these could be devastating to many families, several of my colleagues have argued the proposed restructuring is necessary in part to counteract escalating costs of the Section 8 Housing Program. Indeed, the cost of the Section 8 voucher program has increased, but these increases have been reasonable, legislatively driven, and impermanent. Over half of the growth in cost has resulted from Congressional decisions to increase the number of families the Section 8 Housing Program assists, often as a result of ending other federal public housing initiatives. Another 37 percent of the growth has resulted from an increasing gap between housing costs and the earnings of low-income families. In addition, the program has expanded because of efforts to improve its efficiency; the share of authorized vouchers rose from 90.5 to 96 percent between 2001 and 2003. Cutting the funding would, therefore, punish the program for more effectively achieving its objectives. Furthermore, the actual Section 8 Housing Program costs have risen at a low annual rate of only four percent, and the Congressional Budget Office expects future growth to slow markedly due to the cooling of the housing market, with an expected small 1.8 percent growth in fiscal year 2005.

Studies have shown that a large percentage of low-income families and individuals spend

more than half of their income on housing, severely inhibiting their ability to meet other basic needs. Affordable housing is the foundation of economic self sufficiency, the loss of which is a barrier to employment that affects children, families, and entire communities. Cutting housing funding and reducing opportunities for American families to live in safe housing, will directly correlate with escalating costs in federal spending for welfare, crime, health, and homelessness in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we guarantee the Section 8 Housing Program an adequate level of funding by rejecting the administration's proposal. I hope that my colleagues will join me in taking preemptive action against escalating financial and social costs in the future by providing stable housing for our working poor today.

STATEMENT HONORING PFC. JOHN
S. AMOS II**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and honor that I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding American, a true patriot, and a hero to his country, Army Pfc. John D. Amos II. Pfc. Amos died Sunday, April 4, 2004 while bravely serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom for the Army's 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division (Light), Schofield Barracks. He bravely sacrificed his life to ensure the safety of his fellow soldiers, the Iraqi people, and the very idea of freedom throughout the world.

Pfc. John Amos' unit was sent to the Tamin area of Kirkuk to set up a vehicle inspection point near the police academy. When his unit arrived, residents were conducting a demonstration in the streets surrounding the academy. With the streets cluttered by protesters, Amos' unit began inspecting vehicles and groups of people before they moved through the crowd. Amos was walking in a line of six soldiers when a car attempting to clear the checkpoint exploded. Pfc. Amos was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

Pfc. Amos, a native of Griffith, Indiana, graduated from Valparaiso High School in 2002. Throughout his life, John always had the urge to protect his fellow man. In September 2001, John witnessed a fatal car accident. He tried to help the victim, called 911 and waited for help to arrive. The victim didn't make it and it affected John deeply. It's one of the reasons that prompted him to join the U.S. Army. After the terrorist attacks in 2001, John felt especially compelled to defend the United States.

John Amos is survived by his mother, Susan Amos, his father, John Amos, his sister, Rebecca Amos, two half-brothers, Hunter and Tyler Amos, his grandfather Hank Amos, and grandparents Doug and Lucy Whitehead. John's spirit and compassion will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring the memory of Pfc. John Amos, and in sending our heartfelt condolences to his

family. John is a hero, not only to his family and friends, but also to Northwest Indiana and to the United States of America. He fought bravely for the ideals of freedom, truth, and liberty, and as our nation mourns his loss, let us honor his life and his dedication to the service of his country.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF BROWN v.
BOARD OF EDUCATION**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the historical Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* of May 17, 1954. The struggle against racial discrimination did not end with this decision nor has it ended today. Racial segregation in public places like restaurants and buses was still legal after 1954 and the *Brown II* decision of May 31, 1955 was a step backwards by allowing Southern district courts to integrate public schools "with all deliberate speed." But by declaring the segregation of public schools unconstitutional, the Supreme Court took a first step towards making the United States a society that lived up to its ideals of social equality, democracy and freedom.

The future of every country depends to a large extent on its children. Social values are conveyed to our youngest generation mainly by their parents, but also by their schools. Racial hatred and intolerance are products of a lack of knowledge and the fear of the unknown. Only schools that are racially mixed will increase children's understanding of each other, of other cultures and backgrounds. But today our country is drifting into the wrong direction. Our schools are more racially intermixed than in 1954 but less than in 1968, when our great national leader Martin Luther King was assassinated. While 43 percent of all black youngsters attended predominantly white schools in 1988, this figure has fallen to only 30 percent today. And Hispanic students are even more segregated than African Americans. My home state New York is among the most segregated states in the country and my district is particularly hardly hit. Minority students in my district still attend schools that perform worse than predominantly white schools.

While we should celebrate the historical event of the 1954 Supreme Court decision, let us keep in mind that racial discrimination and social inequality still exist in our country. Our education system still does not offer equal opportunities to all young people. Many schools are chronically underfunded. Let us celebrate the achievements of the civil rights movement in the past, but not forget that the biggest challenges still lie ahead.

MEMORIAL DAY

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, shortly, we will be celebrating Memorial Day, a sacred